

Dr. Nathan's



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“A TRUE PICTURE IS TRUE ART”



But a banjo cyarn't stan' 'spons'bul fur de debil*mint* hit brings,
When a niggah wid a happy heart is settin' 'hind de strings

De Namin' ob de Twins

AND OTHER SKETCHES
FROM THE COTTON LAND

BY
MARY FAIRFAX CHILDS

ILLUSTRATED BY
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NEW YORK
B. W. DODGE & COMPANY
1908

May 6 1908
206217

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To the United Daughters of the Confederacy,
SCATTERED FAR AND WIDE THROUGHOUT OUR GOODLY LAND,
THESE SIMPLE TALES OF THEIR OWN SIMPLE
FOLK ARE DEDICATED.

FOREWORD

DIALECT stories from gifted pens have already left little untold of the old-time negro, a dusky people who were once—pardon the paradox—as sunshine in the Southern homes over which they lovingly and loyally presided.

Those rare writers of prose—Ruth MacEnery Stuart, Thomas Nelson Page, James Lane Allen and others—have written enough to show the younger generations of the love that existed between families and their household servants, a love which even the long, lonely separations after the war could not eliminate.

By incidents of touching nature we are constantly reminded that many of them still feel the loss of those old plantation days, when they rejoiced in the freedom of “cabin, ’taters, an’ possum”; where they took no thought of the morrow, replete with the assurance that in sickness, as in health, “ole Marstah an’ ole Miss” would comfort and support them.

And these incidents have so appealed to the writer that, here in her Northern home, she has not been able to resist the pleasure of recording them, thus living again—as it were—odd moments with that simple and loving folk, whose real existence is a cherished remembrance of her childhood in Kentucky.

(MRS.) MARY FAIRFAX CHILDS.

Brooklyn, N. Y.

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DE NÄMIN' OB DE TWINS

The very fact that negroes made no attempt toward being humorous rendered them, as a race, irresistibly so.

The names decided on by "Granny" for her Ceely's twins are borne by two little darkies in Albemarle County, Virginia.



“What I gwine name Mah Ceely’s twins? I dunno honey, yit”

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DE NAMIN' OB DE TWINS

WHAT I gwine name mah Ceely's twins?

I dunno, honey, yit,

But I is jes er-waitin' fer de fines' I kin git.

De names is putty nigh run out,

So many niggahs heah,

I 'clar' dey 's t'ick as cotton-bolls in pickin'-time o' yeah.

But 't ain' no use to 'pose to me

Ole secondary names,

Lak 'Lizabeth an' *Josephine*, or Cæсах, Torm, an' James,

'Ca'se dese heah twinses ob mah gal's

Is sech a diff'ent kind,

Dey 's 'titled to de grandes' names dat ary one kin find.

Fer sho dese little shiny brats

Is got de fus'-cut look,

So mammy wants fine city names, lak you gits out a book ;

I ax Marse Rob, an' he done say

Some 'rageous stuff lak dis :

He 'd call de bruddah Be'lzebub, de sistah Genesis ;

Or Alphy an' Omegy—de

Beginnin' an' de en'—

But den, ob co'se no man kin tell, what mo' de Lawd 'll
sen' ;

DE NAMIN' OB DE TWINS

Fer de pappy ob dese orphums—
You heah me?—I 'll be boun',
While dey 's er-crawlin' on de flo', he 'll be er-lookin'
roun';

'Ca'se I done seen dem Judas teahs
He drap at Ceely's grabe,
A-peepin' 'hind his han'kercher, at ole Tim's yaller Gabe;
A-mekin' out to moan an' groan,
Lak he was gwine 'o bus'—
Lawd! honey, dem dat howls de mos', gits ober it de fus'.

'Annynias an' Saphiry,
Sis Tab done say to me,
But he'p me, Lawd! what *do* she 'spec' dese chillun gwine
'o be?
'Sides, dem names 's got er cur'us soun'—
You says I 's hard to please?
Well, so 'ould any granny be, wid sech a pa'r as dese.

Ole Pahson Bob he 'low dat I
Will suttinly be sinnin',
Onless I gibs 'em names dat starts 'em right in de be-
ginnin';
"Iwilla" fer de gal, he say,
F'om de tex' "I will a-rise,"
An' dat 'ould show she 's startin' up, todes glory in de
skies;

An' fer dis man chile, Aberham—
De fardah ob 'em all—
Or else Belshazzah, who done writ dat writin' on de wall;

DE N^AMIN' OB DE TWINS

But Pahson Bob—axcuse me, Lawd!—
Hed bettah sabe his bref
To preach de gospel, an' jes keep his 'visin' to hisse'f;

Fer nary pusson, white nor black,
Ain' gib no p'int to me
'Bout namin' dese heah Chris'mus gifs, asleep on granny's
knee;
(Now heshaby—don' squirm an' twis',
Be still, you varmints, do!
You ain' gwine hab no niggah names to tote aroun' wid
you!)

'Ca'se on de questiom ob dese names
I sho is hed mah mine
*Per*zactly an' *perc*idedly done med up all de time;
Fer mah po' Ceely Ann—yas, Lawd,
Jes nigh afo' she died,
She name' dis gal, "Neu-ral-gy," her boy twin, "Hom-i-
cide."

ROOS' HIGH, CHICKEN

ROOS' HIGH, CHICKEN

A CHRISTMAS WARNING

DEY says de beas'es knows de signs—

Roos' high, chicken—roos' high;

'Ca'se fros' is on de punkin vines,

An yaller is de papaw rin's,

An' dat mean Chris'mus come, I fin's—

Roos' high, chicken—roos' high.

You 'd bettah sleep wid one eye shet—

Roos' high, chicken—roos' high;

'An' leab one yeah to heah wid yet,

Or you 'll be yanked off fer a pet;

Now min' you, chicken—don' furget—

Roos' high, chicken—roos' high.

'Ca'se Chris'mus is a-comin' roun'—

Roos' high, chicken—roos' high;

'An' sperits—Lawd! you jes be boun'

Dey 'll be a-snoopin' on de groun'

To ketch whateber kin be foun'—

Roos' high, chicken—roos' high.

DE NAMIN' OB DE TWINS

Mah mouf 's a-wat'rin', whe'r or not—

Roos' high, chicken—roos' high;

An' when you 's b'ilin' in de pot,

Don't tell me dat you 's mighty hot,

An' dat mah 'vice you cl'ar furgot—

Roos' high, chicken—roos' high.

MARSE LINKUM'S MISTEK

When President Lincoln—through Congress—freed the negroes of the United States, at one fell swoop, he gained for the moment the plaudits of the disinterested world.

Since then wise men, in reflective moments, have questioned the prudence of his act; arguing that gradual emancipation would have been the more judicious and kindlier course to pursue.

For the younger generation the edict appeared as a golden key, opening a gateway to the sunny paths of Freedom; but to those whose thoughtful faces and bended forms told of declining years it was indeed but a passport to barren pastures 'neath sullen skies.

MARSE LINKUM'S MISTEK

"SAY, Judy, does you see now whar de Freedom part comes in,

Ou' freedom dat de sojer-boys dey fight so hard ter win?
I neber knowed what slab'ry wuz, 'til jes heah sence de war,

But now I 's fetter'd wid his chains, mo' strong dan I kin b'ar.

"Dey presses in de body, an' dey wuks into de mind,
Till comfo't an' de peace o' Gawd I kin no longah find;
Caze co'se you ain't gwine 'joy de Lawd—dat fac' He sho mus' know—

When hungah 'n col' come stalkin' in—'out knockin' at de do'.

"Great King! ef I could jes furgit dem days afo' de war,
When Marstah seed we hed enough—yaas, honey, an' ter spar'—

An' Miss Furginia, she so kind a-tendin' us—Lawd, me!
I wush Marse Linkum warn't so quick a-settin' *ole folks free*.

"He mought 'a' knowed, wid white folks' sence, he done it all too soon—

He sprung hit lak a huntin'-dog 's a-pouncin' on a coon—

DE NAMIN' OB DE TWINS

He mought 'a' know'd de old fo'ks 'ould 'a' drapt erlong
de way,
Lak corn-stalks in de furrows on a cold an' windy day.

"Dis Freedom 's good enough, o' co'se, fur Ceely, Dan
an' Dick,
Caze dem young ones wuz lakly, an' could l'arn de free-
dom trick;
But to ole folks wid stiffen'd j'int's, an' dimmin' in de
eye,
'Twuz lak you tu'n a ole blin' horse out on de fiel' to die.

"At Mastah's home 't wuz sho 'nough free—de clo'es, de
light, de wood,
De corn-pone, an' de possum-fat—Lawd, Judy! wa'n't it
good?
No lan'-lawd come dar, granny chile, a-pushin' fur de
pay—
Dat po'-trash man cyarn' know dat *dis* heah 's *Dan'el*
Webstah Clay—

"De ole plantation coachman, what drobe his fo'-in-han',
An' sot ez high, an' chaw'd ez large, ez any in de lan';
I gwine 'form him *mah credik 's good*—ole Mastah done
sed so—
An' wid dis sassin' 'bout mah *rint*, he bettah hed go slow.

"I knows down Souf we 's in de fiel' at risin' ob de sun,
But den old Mastah med it good, fur eb'ry stroke we
done;

MARSE LINKUM'S MISTEK

'An' when de night-time come aroun', my! how de ban-
jos rung,
'An' how dem niggahs pat an' dance, an' how dey laugh
an' sung.

"You mind de time ole cross-eyed Pete, an' bandy-legged
Joe,
One night done dance de hoe-down, 'til dey fa'rly shuk
de flo',
An' de white folks from de house come down—ole Mas-
tah wid de res'—
'An' say he 'd gib a fiddle to de one dat done de bes'?

"De worl' 's cl'ar done furgot us sence Marse an' Miss is
gone,
'An' lef' us settin' heah to wait de blowin' ob de hawn;
Great Mastah! please don' *you* furgit to put in writin'
down,
Dat *we* 's to tread de golden streets, an' w'ar de golden
crown—

"Caze sho we 's 'arned a 'title cl'ar to mansions in de
skies,'
Whar Jesus at de frone o' grace will wipe ou' weepin'
eyes,
Fur we is done de bes' we could—de white folks cyarnt
do mo'—
So tell de Angel standin' dar, right by de heb'nly do',

"A-pickin' out de ole white sheep, from dem what 's dyed
in sin,
To keep a good look-out fur us, an' sholy let us in;

DE NAMIN' OB DE TWINS

He cyarnt mek no mistek, good Lawd! caze I kin tell
you why:

'Mah Judy, she 's lame in de back; an' me, blind in one
eye.'

"An' Mammy, when we gits in dar, an' heahs 'em bust an'
sing

De praises ob de Bressed Lamb, an' glory to de King,
I b'liebs I 'll hunt Marse Linkum up, an' jes will let him
know

Dat we did hab de *closes' shabe* a-gittin' froo dat do';

"Caze, dough he done a righteous ac', I reckons, on de
whole,

De freedom dat he gib we finds wa'n't helpin' to de
soul.

An' so I gwine 'o say to him: 'Marse Linkum—'scuzin'
me—

You sho did mek one *big mistek a-settin' ole folks
free!*"

DE BAPTIZIN' O' BLACK BETTY

DE BAPTIZIN' O' BLACK BETTY

“Lawd bless you! Sistah Betty Jane,
What mek you trimble so?
When you comes outen Tadpole Pon’,
You ’ll be ‘ez white ez snow.’”

“No, Bruddah, I ain’ ax dat much,
But arter I ’s dipt down
I ’ll sho be *mo’* dan satusfied
Ter come up—choc’late brown.”

“DOWN SOUF.”

The idea may have prevailed in parts of our American land that, amongst other misfortunes, the negro of the South was overworked.

The impression is entirely an erroneous one, for the servitors were so numerous that the servitude became light; and many a half-grown girl did no more than "keep de flies offen ole Miss"—or every day polish the fine old mahogany bed-posts.



“ I’s heerd o’ Gin’l Lee an’ Gin’l Grant—but I ain’ neber heerd
o’ no ‘gin’l housewuk’ ”

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“DOWN SOUF”

A SHORT time after the War a woman in Boston went to an Intelligence Office to secure a servant.

Amongst others she was particularly attracted by a fine-looking colored girl about sixteen years old, with whom the following conversation took place:

“What is your name?”

“ ‘Ria, ‘Ria Pin’leton, ma’am.”

“What are you here for? What kind of work can *you* do?”

“Lawd! I don’ know, ‘m—mos’ any kind, ma’am.”

“Well, what *have* you done?” persisted the would-be employer, “for I am looking for a girl to do general housework. Do you think you can manage it?”

“Lawd! I don’ know, ‘m. What *is* dat? I ’s heerd o’ Gin’l Lee an’ Gin’l Grant—but I ain’ neber heerd o’ no ‘gin’l housewuk.’”

“Oh,” said the woman, “I mean a girl who can do everything, you know—cooking, washing, ironing, cleaning, and all the rest of the work. Have you ever cooked?”

“Lawd! no, ‘m; I ain’ nuver ‘zactly *cooked*. I ’s been in de kitchen when de cookin’ was bein’ done, but Aunt Ailsie an’ Aunt Marfy *dey* done ole Missus’ cookin’.”

“Well, can you wash and iron?”

“Lawd! no, ‘m; I ain’ nuver done no washin’ nor ironin’, nuddah. Sis Tab an’ Aunt Jinny done ole Missus’

DE NAMIN' OB DE TWINS

washin' an' ironin'. No, ma'am—umph, umph—I ain' eben do mah *own clo'es*. I ain' sho I kin suit you in de washin' an' ironin' business—but den you mought try me."

"Well, I guess you know all about housecleaning, eh?"

"No, not 'zactly, 'm, caze Nervy an' Venus *dey* done all Missus' housecleaning—wid Mose an' 'Lijah ter wash de windahs an' clean de paint, an' ole Uncle Zeke ter shine de flo's. No, 'm, I ain'—nuver—done—dat—nud-dah. Lawd, Lawd!" (reflectively) "I 'clar, I didn' know how little I *did* do home—down Souf."

"Well, I suppose you waited on the table, didn't you?"

"No, ma'am; you suttinly is strikin' on de wrong p'int now. Pomp an' Cæсах wait on ole Marstah's table—an' whoopee! dey shy me outen dat dinin'-room do' ef I so much ez *put a foot* in dar. No, ma'am, I ain' neber wait on no table, nuddah."

"Well, what—did—you—do?" asked the astonished woman, whose curiosity was now thoroughly aroused. "What *did* you do down South, I should like to know?"

"Lawd! 'm—he! he! he—I use mos'ly to—*keep—de—flies—offen—ole—Miss*, an' hunt—'er—*specs*."

"Now, lady," said another bright-looking colored girl who was standing near, and evidently interested in the conversation, "I know'd dat gal wa'n't gwine 'o suit you, caze *she* don' know nuffin'. She ain' had *no 'speunce* lak *I 's* had. You bettah tek *me*, caze when I 'uz down home I use ter—er—er—er—*open de shettahs* in de mawnin', an' *rub—ole Missus'—bed-pos'es!*"

AUNT GLORY'S MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE

AUNT GLORY'S MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE

"You ain' neber heerd 'bouten dis heah c'tificum business—ain' you, Miss Sally? Lawd, honey! Mose is plum nigh tunned fool 'bouten it—say, he gwine hab one writ up, an' put in er shiny frame fer *mah Chris'mus gif*'. He 'low it 'll look rale eddicated fer ter see dat readin' an' writin' wid de names o' Glory an' Mose bof jined tergedder, a-hangin' on de wall. But de S'ord o' de Sperrit sho will come in, Miss Sally, an' 'vide de sheep f'um de goats—caze Ole Glory ain'—gwine—hab—none—ob—it. Here I 's been a-cookin' fer dat no-'count niggah sence long afo' de Wah, an' a-puttin' up wid all his debbilment; but jes ez sho ez he go ter *tie me down* wid one o' dem dar c'tificums—g'long, chile—Ole Glory won' be dar *ter tie*.

"No, Miss Sally, I ain' er 'lowin' ter ac' lak de po' white trash heah in Sleepy Creek, who—he'p me King!—is er *buyin'* dem c'tificums; an' ef Mose Turnah come in dis cabin wid one o' dem ongodly perceedin's—'fo' Gawd!—Glory gwine 'o git out.

"You ax how all dis heah fuss come stirred up?

"Well, honey, one day when I was stan'in' heah in de cabin do', a-puffin' mah ole corncob pipe, all peaceable-lak, dere comes erlong one o' dem dar meddlin' mens f'om Conneticul, an', ez he hed a lean, hongry look, I ax him in de house to tek a cheer.

DE NAMIN' OB DE TWINS

"Well, he sot hisse'f down, an' I sees 'im a-castin' his eyes roun' de room, lak he was a-s'archin' fer some'in' nudder—when all ter once he bus' out er sayin': 'Miss Turner, whar is yo' c'tificum?'

"'C'tificum,' I says. 'Name o' Gawd! man, what is dat?'

"'De c'tificum ob yo' mayage,' he say.

"'Well, dat ain' pesterin' me none, mistah,' I says. 'What do hit look lak?'

"'Wah, mah good 'oman,' he say, 'hit am de writin' what show dat you an' yo' husband was 'nited by de law an' de Gospel, an' is detarmine fer to lib tergedder all de days ob yo' life.

"'I is a preachah ob de Wud,' he say, 'an' I 's come down Souf to show de cullud ladies an' gemmen de right way ter lib. I wants ter sell 'em all certificums, so I 's been a-goin' roun' yo' town a-seein' ef de fust famblies won' buy 'em, an' I heerd Mistah Turnah say he 'd lak to hab one.'

"'Well, look heah, man,' I says, 'we hain' got no c'tificum, an'—he'p me, Lawd!—we ain' gwine git none, nudder; caze one o' dem c'tificums mek you feel jes lak a kickin' mule in de harness, an' ef you eber is broke a mule you knows what dat is.

"'Bruddah 'Lisha Jones, down heah,' I says, 'he got one o' dem fool t'ings when de Elder ma'y him to Sis Lucindy Brown; an' Sis tole me dat he put it in er *gol'* frame on de wall, an' ebry time she see it lookin' at her, an' a-bindin' her lak a fettah, she feel herse'f a-loosin' an' a-loosin' f'om him, twell she jes natchelly could'n stan' it. So she done leab him—an' he a preachah-man, too—

AUNT GLORY'S MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE

an' tuk herse'f off wid dat yaller Jim Jackson, who 'clar' she kin leab when she got er mind ter.

"'Mah ole Miss,' I says ter him, 'ain' neber had one o' dem monimints to *her* mis'ry a-hangin' on de wall, an' she an' ole Marse lib down heah on de plantation ter-gedder fer mo' 'an forty yeah; an' what 's good 'nough fer mah ole Miss am jes good 'nough fer me.' An' I tole dat man she done tell us many times dat it warn't no way fer a Christium ter do—a-partin' deyselves. But, you sees, Miss Sally, Sis Lucindy warn't ter blame fer dat dividin', caze hit were all de fault ob—de—c'tificum.

"Eb'ybody know dat ef you passes by de brackberry patch you ain' none de wus fer it; but ef you p'intedly jumps into de bresh—well, hit do mek er lot o' trouble. An' so hit is wid de niggahs; let 'em erlone, an' dey 's all right, but when you tries to mek er white sheep outen er ole black ram—Lawd! chile—dar 's gwine 'o be buttin' *ebry* time, I kin tell you.

"Well, honey, I skeer dat long-legged razor-back so, he ain' gib me no mo' direction how to lib wid Mose, but he moobe right erlong, an' say he gwine 'o see Mistah Turnah 'bouten hit, a i' dat 's what 's a-pesterin' me—caze hit 'ould be rale onconvenient fer me to light out jes now.

"You axes what in de name o' common sense I gwine do wid de chillun, ef I *does* go?—an' how many ob 'em is dey ob us?

"Now, Miss Sally, you knows dey is sech er pizen lot o' dese heah little niggahs, dat—'fo' de Lawd!—I is done loss de track ob 'em long ago.

"De Great King only know—an' He won' tell—what

DE NAMIN' OB DE TWINS

is gwine er come ob 'em, no mo' does I know mahse'f. Mose—sho—has—kep'—me—'dustrous," she added in reflective tone, puffing at her corncob pipe, "a-habin' all dese heah forty-leben chillun; an' er fine lot o' rapscallions dey is—dat 's what I calls 'em—rapscallions—caze you knows, Miss Sally, er rapscalliom am er chile what tek arter its *daddy*, an' sho all o' dese heah chillun is jes de ve'y spit o' Mose Turnah.

"You ax how many ob 'em is dey? Well—lemme see. Hit wah nine—dat—time—when—dey—hab—de—ober-flow, an' fibe o' dem got drowned. An' sence den—heah come Sapolio, Tooty-Frooty, little spinlin' Job (Mose name him dat, caze he 'low he sholy am 'flicted lak de Profik, wid *wuss* 'an biles), San'iago de Cuby,* an' Hobson Merrimac (dem is name fer de Spaniel Wah), an' den Lastes' an' Leab'er come, an' dey done wind up dis fambly tree.

"You ax what I name 'em Lastes' an Leab'er fer, Miss Sally? You says you ain' neber heerd no names lak dat afo'?

"No, 'm, I 'spec' not; caze *dem* names was med up fer to suit de 'casiom. Mose, he call dat gal 'Lastes',' caze he 'low she be de lastes' one ob de bunch—an' den when de udder gal come, I calls her 'Leab'er,' caze Mose 'low it a-gittin' too hot roun' heah, an' he done leab me den—'ter git he bref,' he say"—and the old negro gave a chuckle.

"But he done come back ergin—lak I knowed he 'ould—an' seem ter be a-'havin' hisse'f all right till dat dar

*These last four names are borne by little darkies in Albemarle County, Virginia.

AUNT GLORY'S MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE

Conneticul man come aroun' an' stir him all up 'bouten dis heah c'tificum business, which *I is* p'intedly—gwine—ter—spile. Yaas, heah me, Lawd! jes—ez—sho—ez—mah—name—is—Gloriana.

"Dere 's mo' dan one way ter 'kill er cat'; an' jes so, ef er pusson cyarn' rule de roos' wid dey *mouf*, dey mought do it wid dey *foot*. An' when hit come ter de *las' pinch*, Miss Sally, I is allus moobed by de Sperrit; an' so I go to de meetin' las' night, an' ax de Lawd ter guide dese willin' feet, an' show me what ter do. Well, honey, I no mo' 'an gib two or three big groans, an' rock mahse'f back an' fof—'mos' a-tumblin' ober Bruddah 'Lige Willums—when I heerd de Voice f'om on high. An' hit say: 'Glory, don' you stan' no mo' imperence f'om *no* man, an' don' you gib in to de mashinations ob de Debil.'

"So, Miss Sally, ef de ch'ice lays 'tween *me* an' dat c'tificum, *I is boun' ter be dat ch'ice*; caze, ef not, Ole Glory gwine 'bey de Wud what come to her, an'—git out. An', ef she go, she don' tek no baggage, nudder—heah me, Lawd!—fer she *come* to Mistah Moses Deuteronomy Turnah *outen* dese heah leben chillun, an'—'fo' Gawd!—she—gwine—ter—*leab—widout—'em—too*."

MAH HONEY

MAH HONEY

DE bee 's a-wukkin' all de day,
A-stealin' from de vine
Dat 's hangin', kine o' lazy, roun'
Dis cabin-do' o' mine.

He done got all de sweet'nin' in
Dat little bag o' his'n,
An' now, afroo de summah air,
I sees 'im jes a-whizzin'.

Is he gwine tek it to de hibe,
An' fill er little cell?
Lawd! no, he ain' got no sech mind.
I knows his track too well.

He gwine right to dat Mandy dar,
A-sleepin' 'neaf de tree,
An' stick dat sweet'nin'—umph! *I* knows—
A-layin' sto' fer me.

An' when ahin' er cloud ter-night
De moon 's about to dip,
I 's gwine er do some thievin', too—
An' steal it off her lip.

DE OLE BANJO
A CHRISTMAS MEMORY

There is something very pathetic in old Uncle Rube trying to tune up his banjo, "ter mek beliebe" Christmas is come.

Christmas is at once both the gladdest and saddest time of the year; gladdest to those who, in the sunny present, look only to a rosy future—saddest to those who, in a dreary present, look back upon a rosy past.

DE OLE BANJO

A CHRISTMAS MEMORY

“WAH, dis heah ain’ no Chris’mus, chile,
Ef de time *is* come aroun’,
An’ snowflakes, lak de cotton-bolls,
Is whitenin’ all de groun’;
I ’s done tuk up mah ole banjo,
Ter mek beliebe hit ’s come,
But when de heart cyarn’ sing de song,
De banjo, too, is dum’.

“I ’s done mah bes’ ter chune her up,
But de pegs keeps slippin’ back,
Ontil hit ’pears dat her an’ me
Is *bof* done lost de track;
But den de banjo—Lawd!—she know
Dat she cyarn’ do *her* part
When she feel ole Rube is ailin’
Wid dis miz’ry roun’ de heart.

“Mah fingahs, nudder, ain’ so slick
Ez what dey use ter be;
’Pears lak dey onct could play deyselves,
Widout no he’p from me;

DE NAMIN' OB DE TWINS

An' now—you tek dis notice, chile—
To mek a banjo *sing*,
De sperit ob de music got
Ter be in eb'ryt'ing.

“I 's seen de time de Pahson, when
He heah dis ole banjo,
'Ould tek ole Missus by de han ,
An' step out in de flo' ;
But a banjo cyarnt stan' 'spons'bul
Fur de debilmint hit brings,
When a niggah wid a happy heart
Is settin' 'hind de strings.

“De cabins all is empty now,
Dat onct was gay an' bright,
An' bats an' squinch-owls meks dey ha'nts
Dere froo de lonesome night ;
I sees 'em in de ebenin's, chile,
A-flyin' froo an' froo,
Jes lak dey 'd bought 'em from ole Marse,
An' paid de money, too.

“De gre't house, lak a big tombstone,
Stan's yondah, white an' sad,
A-mo'nin' like fur we-all folks
Dat use ter mek it glad.
No logs is blazin' on de harf,
No lights nor music dar,
An' 't 'pears ter me dat ghoses, chile,
Is movin' eb'rywhar.

DE OLE BANJO

"Me tell you what *is* Chris'mus, den?—

Lawd! boy, you 'd t'ink dat I

Hed sho furgot de Bressed Book,
An' 's mekin' up er lie;

You neber seed sech times we hed,

An' neber will, fur sho,

Caze Freedom cum, jes 'fo' yo' day,
An' shet de Mastah's do'.

"Ter mek a Chris'mus, you mus' hab

Yo' possum an' corn-pones,

Wid some o' Mastah's whiskey, fur
To limbah up yo' bones;

You 's boun' ter hab yo' 'bacco,

Yo' buttah-milk, an' ham,

Wid jole an' cabbage, Elim,
An' a honey-drappin' yam.

"An' den you 's boun' ter hab ole Miss

A-sendin' down fur you,

An' de chillun callin' 'Chris'mus gif',
Jes lak dey use ter do.

Lawd! no, dey ain' no Chris'mus *now*,

Hit been gone sence de war,

De bomb-shells carried it away
When dey whuz froo de a'r.

"Dis ole banjo—*she* know it gone,

Caze I cyarn' mek her play,

Dough I 's been tryin' tight dese strings,
Bes' part ob dis whole day.

DE NAMIN' OB DE TWINS

She knows dere ain' no dancahs heah,
Lak in de days gone by,
An' so she jes de same as 'cl'ars
She ain' a-gwine 'o try.

"So, granny, fix up Elin's bed;
He done gone fas' asleep,
A-huggin' up dat broom-stick gun
He foun' dar in de heap.
I 'd gib de worl' ef dis chile could
Lib long enough ter see
One Chris'mus lak we use ter hab—
Dis ole banjo an' me."

DE BARN DANCE

DE BARN DANCE

BY MARY FAIRFAX CHILDS

“Hit is Chris’mus in de quartahs—
Git de banjo f’om de wall,
An’ gib de darkies, eb’ry one,
De ole-time Chris’mus call;
Heah ’s Sally Ann, an’ Marfy Jane,
Ole Zeke, an’ Possum Joe,
Aunt Sukey, an’ dat gode-haid Bob,
Jes eechin’ fur de flo’.

“Big Fiddlin’ Jim ’s done whoop us up
Wid dat dar t’rum o’ his’n,
An’ now de banjo—yes, my Lawd!—
Jes sees us all a-whizzin’;
Ole Pompey ’s flingin’ Mammy dar,
An’ little spinlin’ Brown
Done grab Aunt Polly by de wais’,
To swing—free hund’ed poun’.

“Dese yaller gals wid pompydohs,
Dey swish dey skuts up high,
An’ grins lak chess-cats—sassy jades—
Ez dey goes skittin’ by;

DE NAMIN' OB DE TWINS

An' sho we 'll dance to 'Money Musk'
Ez long ez Jim 'll play—
An' dat 'll be till roostah Pete
Crow up de dawn o' day.

"We 'chassez right,' an' 'chassez lef',
'Swing cornahs'—'balance all,'
'An' 'tu'n yo' pardnahs'—'promenade,'
Ez fas' ez he kin call;
We kicks each uddah on de shins—
But what we keer fer dat?—
Ole Deacom Bob done kotch de fire,
An' *he* 's begun to pat.

"An' now chu'ch-membahs settin' roun',
Who wouldn' shek a toe,
Jes feels de sperit wukkin' 'em,
An' *dey* 's up on de flo';
Kaze one pat ob de Deacom's foot
Declar's—hit ain' no crime
To hab yo' fling up in de barn
On dis heah Chris'mus time."

THE "OLD MASTERS"

There is nothing so appealing to the lover of the old-time negro as his utter simplicity.

Many years after the war an Exposition Hall was erected in one of our large Northern cities for the purpose of exhibiting choice pictures and works of art.

An old Southern negro—who with his wife had long ago drifted to the great metropolis—in passing this building overheard the remark, “the old masters will be in in the morning.”

This was, of course, in allusion to the rare and valued paintings which have fallen as a legacy to mankind.

But to his simple intelligence it represented but one idea—the coming of the old masters from the South “to see de sights,” which gladsome news he gives to his wife Dinah in the following words :



“ Oh, sah, I’s jes drapt in ter see ef *my* ole mastah’s heah ”

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THE "OLD MASTERS"

"LAWD! Dinah chile, git up an' shout, an' bress de Lawd
dis day!

Caze, ez I 's gwine erlong de street, I heerd de white
fo'ks say—

Dese ole yeahs heerd it, mammy, jes ez sho ez I is
bawn—

Dey said dat de ole Marstahs wuz a-comin' in de mawn.

"I 'uz gwine 'long by dat buildin' dey 's been wukkin' on,
you know,

An' whar dey said dey 'low'd ter hab dat great big pic-
tur' show;

An' I 'spec' hit all is ready, wid dem gran' 'lectricium
lights;

An' dey 's 'vited de ole Marstahs fur ter come an' see
de sights.

"I 's sorry you 's so po'ly dat you cyarn' git out at all,
Caze I gwine in de mawnin', sho, I gwine right to dat
hall,

An' see ef *my ole Marstah* 's dar, who wuz so good to
me

Afo' Marse Linkum writ de wo'ds 'at set de darkies
free.

DE NAMIN' OB DE TWINS

"I 'll tell him all about de onconven'ences we 's had,
De col' an' hungah we 's gone froo, wid rheumatiz so
bad;
An' his hyart 'll come nigh bustin' when he knows you
's laid in bed,
A-wantin' fur a cup o' tea, an' fur a bite o' bread.

"I 'll tell him dat de wuk wuz skeerce, an' mighty hard
to fine,
Caze dey gibb it to de niggahs 'at 's got youngah han's
dan mine.
Dere 's no mo' room fur ole fo'ks—dey 's all done had
deir day—
An' now dey 's stumblin' 'long de road, jes takin' up
de way!

"But I couldn' hab lef' you nohow—I 's boun' ter put *you*
fus'—
Bekaze I tuk you, Dinah, 'fur bettah or fur wus';
Dem 's jes de wo'ds de Pahson read when we stood on
de flo',
In our ole Missus' parlor mo' 'an fifty yeahs ago.

"I 'll ax him 'bout de good ole home an' han'some Massa
Jack,
Who went a-marchin' to de war an' neber had come
back;
I 'll ax him 'bout de cabin whar de chillun used to play,
Ez happy ez de guinea-pigs froo all de lib-long day;

THE "OLD MASTERS"

"An', Dinah chile, what does you frink I gwine 'o ax him, too?

I 'll beg, when he goes back down Souf, he 'll tek bof me an' you;

I 'll tell him 't won' be long afo' de good Lawd calls us 'come,'

An' we wants Him beckon to us from de little cabin home."

* * * * *

The next day in the Artists' Hall, where Fashion's throng did meet,

An aged negro, hat in hand, approached with trembling feet.

"What 'll you have, Old Fo-de-war?" asks one, advancing near.

"Oh, sah, I 's jes drapt in ter see ef my ole Marstah 's heah.

"I heerd he would be heah to-day"—and modestly he stood,

And gazed with frightened look upon the faces strange and rude.

"But I don' see him"—and a tear begrimed his dusky cheek,

Though mute, more eloquent than words his falt'ring lips could speak.

He turned and, with a tott'ring step, passed out the massive door,

And left the gay and glitt'ring crowd, as careless as before—

DE NAMIN' OB DE TWINS

Unconscious that a Christian heart, so simple, fond and
true,
Was breaking 'neath that tattered coat of thin and faded
blue.

With weary step he shuffled on, back to his humble
room,
And cried: "Oh, Dinah! he warn't dar—ole Marstah
didn't come!
I went right up de big stone steps, an' stood widin de
do',
But dere warn't a single pusson dar I eber seed afo'.

"De Lawd, He 'll have to he'p us b'ar dis burden ob de
day,
An' gib His sarvents patience fur to trus' an' watch an'
pray.
Ole Marstah, he won' come to us"—great tears his eyes
bedim—
"An' we mus' wait, ole woman, 'til we can go to Him."

* * * * *

One grave, long since in Southern land, had lain 'neath
orange-bloom;
And in the city's pauper-lot two exiles found a tomb;
All 's over now—the three sleep low, beneath the quiet
sod—
But they have found "ole Marstah" in the Paradise of
God.

LITTLE ABE'S SOLILOQUY

LITTLE ABE'S SOLILOQUY

"I 's TIRED ob edication—
'T ain' got no sence no way,
Kaze I kyarn' see why 'two—slant—lines,
Wid—one—across, meks *A*.'

"An' den de teachah say—'er—line
Wid—two—half *O*s is *B*,'
But what 's de good o' knowin' dat
Is mo' dan I kin see.

"I 'd ruddah play de juce-harp, on
De bench by Mammy's do';
I 'd ruddah hunt de possum, when
De moon 's a-dippin' low;

"I 'd ruddah pick de cotton, when
De sun 's a-shinin' hot,
Or hold de calf, when Sally Ann 's
A-milkin' in de lot.

"'Some day you may be *Presidint*,'
De teachah say to me,
'Ef you 'll do sums an' writin' good,
An' l'arn yo' A B C.'

DE NAMIN' OB DE TWINS

"But Pap say, 'Readin' ain' no 'count
To he'p a boy to *hoe*,'
An' dat 's what he gwine feed me fer—
So books 'll hev to go.

"Yaas—I'arnin's mighty pesterin';
So I 'lows—no indeed,
I—*ain'*—*gwine*—*be*—*no*—*Presidint*,
Ef I is got to—*read*."

PARSON PETE'S SERMON

PARSON PETE'S SERMON

"Berhol', I shows you a myst'ry."

"HIT do mos' gin'lly fall on de preachah, mah belubbed bredren, to 'splain de wuds ob de tex', but in dis heah instance Ole Pete ain' a-gwine 'o try; kaze de 'postle an' de 'pistle hisse'f dey *bof* says p'intedly—dey is a *myst'ry*, an' *dat settles it*.

"What is a myst'ry? Well, dat is de question. Wah, a myst'ry is, o' co'se, sumpin de Lawd don' wan' you know nuttin' 't all 'bouten, or He 'd a-tol' you; kaze ef you *knows* hit, an' kin '*splain* hit, den er bline mule could see hit ain' no myst'ry.

"Dere 's ontirely too much 'splainin' ob de Scriptures now, mah bredren; fo'kses don' swaller hit down, lak de Lawd attended dey should; no, sah, dey jus' fixes hit up wid some kine o' sweet'nin', fer to kill de tase ob hit—lak hit wah a dose o' ile. But heah me, chillun! ef you—spec—hit—to—do—de—wuk, you—is—got—to—swaller—hit—in—de—natchel—state.

"Some o' de white fo'ks nowadays—so I heern a preachah-man say—dey 'clars dey 's a-gwine git to de 'bottom-rock' ob eb'ryt'ing; but, mah bredren, how—is—dey—gwine—git—dar?

"Dis 'gittin' dar' am a mighty treach'rous groun', chil-

DE NAMIN' OB DE TWINS

lun; heap wusser dan de ole marsh down dere in de grave-yard, an' I mahse'f—who been de cap'n o' dis ole Chu'ch o' Zion, lo! dese forty yeah—I 'clars eben *I* is afeard'd to set mah foot on de road o' Reason.

“Kaze, jes as soon as de Debil see you tek dat er way—an' he allus a-lookin' out fer you lak a rampin' an' 'a roarin' lion'—so de Bibul say—he gwine come erlong wid dat dar clove-hoof o' his'n, an' dem slick, butt'ry wo'ds, an' tu'n you offen de track o' Faif, a-bringin' trouble—jes lak he done bring it afo', when he swade Miss Ebe fer to eat dat apple one time.

“An', mah sistern, an' mah bredren, berlieb me when I says dat de human minds o' we po' sinnahs kyarn' *begin* to tek in de wonderful wo'ks ob de Lawd, no mo' dan kin de gruntin' ole sow in de pig-sty onderstan' what ole Marstah is done in de past, an' what he gwine 'o do in de mawnin'.

“‘Berhol', I shows you a myst'ry!' Yaas, lambs o' de flock, an' sheeps o' de fol', de Great Mastah don' show us nuffin' else, fer *eb'ry t'ing* He done made am a myst'ry, an' whar, in de name o' Gawd! is de man what kin onderstan' it hisse'f—much less 'splain it?

“Now, tek fer de fus' mattah our eb'ry-day 'speunce wid de chicken an' de aig. We don' know nuttin' 't all 'bout de fus' principums ob dat aig, dough—he! he! he!—eb'ry niggah know 'bout de chicken—some ob you mos' in pertickler; but de wises' man in *all de worl'*, from de Judges cl'ar plum down to Marse Noah—who done tote dat chicken in de Ark wid 'im—he kyarn' 'form you *which was med de fus'*. De chicken mek de aig—ef you let 'im erlone, an' de aig 'll mek de chicken, if you jes

PARSON PETE'S SERMON

gib 'im time; but de on'splainable myst'ry am: Which—come—de—fus'?

"Now, de preachah, or de profik, what kin 'lighten me on *dat* p'int, let him come wid his l'arnin' an' do so; but, mah dearly belubbed bredren, dey don' know no mo' 'bouten hit dan do ole Aunt Ailsie's baby a-sleepin' dar on its muddah's bre's', kaze de Great King who writ de Book, He say *it am a myst'ry*. An' so is de fillin' ob de Ark, de 'vidin' ob de Jordan, de feedin' wid de manna, de speakin' ob de ass (dough I don' persidder dat in no ways 'markabul, kaze we 's all heern mo' asses speak—yaas, my Lawd!—dan we 's eber heern bray). An' now 'bout dat brayin'. I feels hit mah bounden juty to warn you, chillun of grace, dat dere 's a ass right on dis fiel'—jes heah, close to de pulpit, an' ready to 'dress de meetin' when I sets down.

"You all sees 'im, an' know'd 'im on de plantation as 'Slipp'ry Sam,' but heah he come back, wid his new-fangled bombacious talk, a-callin' hisse'f de Rev. Samuel Allison Callaway—a-struttin' long heah 'mong Marstah's ole people, a-airin' his sto'-clo'es an' his onbelief.

"You all 'membahs his Pap an' Mammy, born down heah on de ole Summerville plantation—reg'lar good ole dippin' Baptists—a-weepin' at de monah's bench while de meetin' wah in sessiom, an' on de way back to de cabin, sometimes a-bre'kin' up de sessiom dat de Cochin Chinys an' de Plymuf Rockahs was a-holdin' *on dey roos*'. (Yaas, my Lawd! ef de ghos'es ob chickens could jes come back an' talk!) Howsomeber, de chariot done swung low fer dem long ago, an' dey now is a-wearin' ob de 'golden slippahs,' an' 'a-swingin' on de golden gate,' plum igno-

DE NAMIN' OB DE TWINS

ran' ob de fac' dat dere 'Slipp'ry Sam' am a-deavorin' to slip up de ole bed-rock Christioms ob de Chu'ch o' Zion.

"But we kyarn' be too hard on dem, kaze dey was pus-swaded to de eddication by date po'-trash furriner who come down heah, a-onsettlin' all our peoples wid his white-fo'ks notions. He didn't hab no idee what a woolly haid is lak; but you-all knows f'om speunce dat it ain' no mo' lak a white-fo'k's haid *inside* dan it is *outside*. No, sar, dere 's a pow'rful lot o' diff'unce atween 'em. A white haid am got all de diff'ent 'partmints inside ob it, fer to hol' de halgebrys, de gometrys, de physmatics, de spellin', an' all de res' ob dem sciences; but a woolly haid is jes got *one* 'partmint in hit, an' dat am fer to hol' de knowledge ob de banjo, de cotton-fiel', de 'tater-patch, an' de—chick'n roos'! Now, when all dem 'strep'rous ideas git jumbled up in de niggah's haid, dat one little hole dar git so full it jes *busses*—an' den de niggah ain' got no place to hol' nuffin'—he ain' got no sense at all. Den, you see, de *kintry* hit done los' a *jedge*, or a *Presidint*, or som'n, an' ole Marstah he done los' a fiel' han'.

"Now, dat jes de way wid dis heah boy ob Zeke an' Liny. Fus', de fool idee git inter Zeke an' Liny's haid dat dey mus' hab 'im lak young Marse Aleck an' Marse George, an' dat idee, chillun, putty nigh busses dey ole skulls wide open; so dey sen's him offen to dat eddication school whar dey gits de l'arnin', an' de l'arnin' got inter *his* haid—an' *plum busses* hit; de quinquonces ob which you all done seed fer yo'se'f.

"Caze ain' he come back down heah—de ongodly pus-secutor an' back-slider—an' preach dat he ain' gwine ber-lieb *nuffin* 't all, whar he kyarn' un'erstan'? Ez if de

PARSON PETE'S SERMON

Lawd was gwine 'o mek t'ings so easy lak, dat eben a fool niggah could tek 'em all in. No, bress Gawd! dey is myst'ries! an' we kyarn' none ob us on'erstan' 'em on-til we sees Him face to face—lak He tell us.

"But de Debil, you know—mah belubbed bredren—kin tek de form o' man; so I is mons'ously skeered less'n dis citified niggah heah gwine onsettle de faif ob some o' ole Marstah's baid-rock beliebers, who I 's done been 'zortin' wid fer de las' forty yeah!

"Dere ain' no use a-talkin' 'bout it, mah chillun, but it sometimes do 'pear to me lak de Lawd He jes a-tryin' fer to mixen us up on a *puppose*, fer to tes' our Faif. Kaze de Bibul He done gib us am a cur'us Book, fer de reason kaze de *lessen* you knows ob hit, de *wisah* you raily is. Fer don' de Gospel p'intedly say, dat onless you 's 'simpul ez a little chile' you kyan' see de Kingdom?

"Now, mah chillun, you sho kin draw de mos' comfut f'om de wuds—you dat ain' eddicated in de semitaries, nor hain' got de hifalutin' l'arnin' ob de white fo'ks—kaze hit don' say nuthin' 't all 'bouten de algebry, nor dem gometry books, whar I heahs Marse George a-wrastlin' wid; hit don' say eben 'bout knowin' ez much ez Bruddah Tomkins heah, who done 'vince us all, dat he been edified by de Sperit. Hit don' say nuffin' 't all 'bout knowin' when de rain is gwine 'o rain, an' de snow 's a-gwine 'o snow lak ole 'ram-butt' Bill—what kin talk to—yaas, Lawd!—an' on'erstan' de possums an' de coons what tells 'im all de weddah-signs.

"No—hit don' say nuffin' on all dem p'int's, but one t'ing hit *do say*, an' dat dey ain' no 'sputin' 'bout; hit do say: 'Berhol', I shows you a MYST'RY.' Yaas, chillun, an'

DE NAMIN' OB DE TWINS

stacks an' stacks on 'em, which we 's jes *p'intedly boun'* to believ; kaze de good Book done say dat *widout Faif* hit am 'onpossibul to please Gawd.' An' dough hit ain' a beholdin' o' *me* fer to specerlate on de wharabouts ob any bruddah—whar he is, or whar he gwine—arter he leab dis planetary system, I tells you, chillun ob de Chu'ch of Zion, dis heah ole Pete who, lak mah Bruddah Paul, am de leas'es ob de 'postles—he ain' afeerd to per-nounce it *fer a fac'* dat dat wild an' haid-strong bruddah what don' swaller *all* dem cur'us myst'rys, what de Lawd done tol' us, he sholy gwine wish some day dat he kin come back f'om dat place *whar he is*, an' git jis *one mo' drap o' water*, fer to cool his tongue, ouden ole 'Tadpole Pon'.' ”

MANDY AND "OLE MISS"; OR, AFTER MANY
DAYS

In the vicissitudes of war the loss of family, fortune and friends is not unusual.

These verses refer to a Southern woman—a native of Louisiana—who, penniless and afflicted, was placed by relatives in a hospital, where she remained so long as to outlive those who provided for her.

In the case of a charity patient it is but a step from the hospital to the almshouse, and the desolate, deserted woman soon found herself one of its inmates.

She had been there but four weeks when an old negro—a servant of bygone days—heard of it and, though living at some distance, came to look after “Miss Lucy,” took her from the poorhouse to her own humble quarters, and went out washing to support her.

One who understands the negro nature will find this poem true to life.

Mandy’s allusion to the old lame deacon’s “mekin’ tawk afo’ de free-bawn trash” shows the position of superiority which upper-class negroes of the South felt toward those “who neber had no Miss.”

Pride in their Master’s family was a preëminent feature—and the poorhouse a never-dreamed-of destiny, too fearful to consider.

In her delicacy, you see, old Mandy alludes to it as “dis boa’din’-house.”

MANDY AND "OLE MISS"; OR, AFTER MANY
DAYS

"GREAT King o' Saints! Miss Lucy, is dis you, honey
deah?

De Lawd He knows I neber 'spec' to see *my* mistis
heah;

Ole Mandy 's come to git you, chile, an' carry you away,
Whar she kin lub an' keer fur you—what, honey? what
you say?

"Why ain' I come no sooner? I awd bless me! I declar'
I neber know'd whar you is been sence eenin' o' de
war;

Las' night at meetin', Humpin' Joe, de ole lame deacon,
say

He *know* you in dis County Home—he seed you cl'ar
ez day.

"I 'd jes come f'om de mo'nahs' bench when he say dat
to me,

Or I 'd a-cussed him, den an' dar, fur sassin' up so
free.

I tol' him shet his punkin-haid—so mad I mos' was
cryin'—

But den I 'low'd I 'd come to-day, an' see ef he were
lyin'.

DE NAMIN' OB DE TWINS

"De idee o' dat blacksome wretch a-mekin' talk lak dis
Afo' de free-bawn niggah trash what neber hed no
'Miss'!

But don' you mind dat now, chile—you come erlong—
yaas, do;

Kaze I is got a leetle room, jes big enough fur two;

"An' I kin wuk—dese hard ole hands kin do de washin'
yit,

An' I 'll gib you de bigges' ha'f ob eb'ryt'ing I git;

Hit won' be no *fine libin'*—but, honey, don' you keer—
Be bettah dan *dis* boa'din'-house, wid all dis 'po'-trash'
heah.

"To t'ink *wese fambly* come to dis! Great Marstah! I
declar'

You sho does press dis bustin' heart wid mo' dan it kin
b'ar;

But—come erlong wid Mandy, chile; t'ings mought be
wuss, you see,

Kaze now, ole Missus, I 's got *you*, an' you 's got po'
ole *me*.

"I gwine 'o mek dat leetle room shine brightah dan a pin,
Bekaze to hab *you* dar, ole Miss, 'll be lak home agin;
An' till de trumpet soun' fur you to walk de golden
street,

You jes shall fol' dem little han's, an' res' dem little feet.

"I 's got a tolalul ole baid, which I keeps clean an' white;
An' I kin mek a pallet down, an' sleep by you at night;

MANDY AND 'OLE MISS"

I 's got a good split-bottom cheer—dat cheer I 'll allus
keep—
Bekaze I rock'd de babies dar, an' sung 'em off to sleep.

"You cryin', honey? Does I see de teahs roll down yo'
face?

Well, now, Miss Lucy, 'don' you gib no sech commo-
tions place;

Kaze we will lib togedder, chile—jes lak it use to be—
'Cept I 'll be keerin' now fer *you*, whar you once kee'd
fer *me*."

* * * * *

In fond embrace, two women from the almshouse walked
away;

The one was white, the one was black—and both were
old and gray;

But angels of the sunset skies saw more, saw deeper
yet—

They saw the true, the priceless heart in ebon casket
set.

WHEN EBENIN' COMES

WHEN EBENIN' COMES

De sun, he 'lows ter hide 'is light—
An' I don' know but what he 's right—
Kaze hit won' do to shine *too bright*
When ebenin' comes.

Dat summah-gal—de lady moon,
A-smilin' from de sky in June,
Gibs jes de light ter suit a "coon"
When ebenin' comes.

I lubs ter set aside de do',
An' t'rum upon mah ole banjo,
An' play de sweetes' chunes I know,
When ebenin' comes.

Or else I walks wid Lindy Jane
Adown ole Marstah's rail-fence lane,
An' tells her what I got ter 'splain,
When ebenin' comes.

'An' Lindy? Lawd! she heah me, too,
An' 's mighty glib ter he'p me froo,
Lak all dese gals is *sho* ter do,
When ebenin' comes.

OLE JOE AN' DE YALLER MULE; OR, "FAITH-
FUL UNTO DEATH"

At a late reunion of the Confederate veterans in Richmond, Virginia, it was noted that the rear of their procession was composed entirely of old negro men.

These had faithfully followed and served their masters during the war, and were entitled to a place in those ranks, which now, gradually thinning out, can never call for reinforcements.

There could be nothing more affecting in history than the sight of these faithful colored servants accompanying the master to the field, waiting on him, fighting with him and, in many instances, bearing home his letters and personal trinkets when dead.



In fond embrace two women, from the almshouse, walked away,
The one was white, the one was black, and both were old and gray

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OLE JOE AN' DE YALLER MULE; OR, "FAITH-
FUL UNTO DEATH"

"I TELL you how it wuz, ole Marse, de mens 'uz drappin'
roun',
Jes lak de leaves f'om off de trees is kiv'rin' up de
groun';
An' on ole Bob, Marse Harry he come chargin' f'om de
rair,
His sode an' gun a-glisterin' lak sunshine in de air.

"Ole Bob he snort an' toss his haid, a-trimblin' at de fire,
While in de stirrup, eager lak, Marse Hal rise high an'
higher—
While I wuz clost ez I could git, a-prayin' all de time
Dem Yankee balls 'ould pass him by, an' spar' dat chile
o' mine.

"But, Lawd! ole Marse, de pra'r wuz yit a-hangin' on
mah lip
When, Great King! in de gully dar, ole Bob he give a
slip—
An' den he an' Marse Harry done drapted from mah
sight,
A-fallin'—lak I know'd he 'd fall—in fo'mos' ob de
fight!

DE NAMIN' OB DE TWINS

"Fur dat bullet turn'd no cornahs—hit hed *one* t'ing in
min',
Which wuz to pick de braves' mark dere wuz erlong de
line—
An' so he hit po' white-foot Bob right squar' dar in de
haid,
An' down he come a-rollin' 'mong de dyin' an' de daid.
"I 'uz on ole Jude, de yaller mule you 'vised me fur to
ride,
Bekase you 'low'd dey warn't no ball gwine punctuate
he's hide,
Which wuz, I sw'ars! de Gospel trufe; kaze, 'cep'n fur
dat skin,
Dis niggah 'd been at Heben's gate, a-pleadin' to git in;
"Fur when a ball come whizzin' 'long I heerd a funny
soun',
An' I 'low'd me an' ole Judas wuz dyin' on de groun'—
But no, sah! he jes hump hisse'f, kaze he didn' lak de
shock.
An' me? Lawd! I sot stiddy as 'de house upon de
Rock.'
"When Bob drapt, co'se Marse Harry drapt, an' 'fo' dat
he could rise,
Dey—chargin' lak de Debil's men, wid cusses an' wid
cries—
Jes trode him down, ole Marstah, an' when I nex' seed
him
His wuds wuz sof' an' quav'rin'—his eyes wuz gittin'
dim.

OLE JOE AN' DE YALLER MULE

"We moved him from de battle-fiel' to underneaf a tree,
Whose kind ole branches from de sun dey shaded him
an' me;

An' den I fotch him watah from a spring right close to
han',

An' tu'ns him so dat he mought res' as easy as he can.

"My Gawd! it lak to bre'k mah heart to see him lyin'
dar,

Dat white look on his face, an' blood a-soakin' in his
ha'r;

So down I sets an' lays his haid right lovin' on mah
knee,

An' den he raise his dimmin' eyes an', lookin' up at me,

"I says: 'Marse Harry, time ain' come fur sech as *you*
to go;

Oh, Lawd! I wush you 'd change de place wid dis ole
triflin' Joe,

Kaze I 'ould ruddah die right heah dan tek mahse'f back
home,

An' tell ole Marstah, waitin' dar, you 's neber gwine to
come.'

" 'Yes, Joe,' he says, a-trimblin' lak, an' pressin' ov mah
han',

'You 'll hev to go back home, ole boy, as soon now as
you can;

Jus' look aroun' de tent, take back de little I 's got lef',
An' tell 'em all, fur me, dat you wuz "faifful unto def:"'

DE NAMIN' OB DE TWINS

“ ‘Don’ talk dat way,’ I sez; ‘Marse Hal, you ’s been de same to me,
An’ faifful *one* meks faifful *two*, as fur as I kin see.’
So, heah I is, ole Marstah, dough I cyarn’ mek it plain;
Dese ’screpancies ob Providence is moughty hard to
’splain.

“Ole Joe cyarn’ tell why *he* come back wid dis ole yaller mule,
Whose eb’ry reputatiom p’int to bein’ jes a fool,
While our Marse Hal, an’ white-foot Bob, heah in dey manhood prime,
Wuz knocked off the tree o’ life afo’ dey come to time.

“You ax who bury him? T’ank Gawd! ole Joe done dat hisse’f.
I sot by him, ole Marse, ontill he brebe his las’es’ bref;
An’ arter dat de King o’ Heb’n done shet his eyes in sleep,
I drapted on mah knees an’ prayed de Lawd his ‘soul to keep.’

“Ob co’s’e, mos’ ’lastin’es’ respec’s I ’s boun’ show Judas now
(I ’s done tuk off mah cap to him, wid mah polites’ bow),
But sence his ole hide sheds de balls, Great King! I wush dat *he*
Had rid Marse Harry ’long dat line, an’ lef’ ole Bob to me.

OLE JOE AN' DE YALLER MUIE

"So I grieb's to say, ole Marstah, I 's heah, wid Judas,
too,

Who, lak dat Balaam's Bible ass, has sholy tote me froo;
Kaze, neber fearin' shot nor shell, nor flamin' ob de
s'ord,

Jes went his way, a-bearin' on dis sarbent ob de Lawd."

"NAME THIS CHILD"

It was no unusual thing in the South for negroes to bring their children to the church for baptism.

This was particularly true amongst the Episcopal families of Virginia who, being widely scattered, in many instances erected and attended the little church on their own, or a neighboring, plantation.

The negroes' love for Bible names is a faithfully recorded fact; and the giving of such to their children, in the most ridiculous manner, was one of the interesting features of plantation life.

In their choice they often showed great originality, as in the following case.

“NAME THIS CHILD”

—*Baptismal Service*

“SCAPE o, Mastah, is de name I
Done pick out fer him,”
Old Hannah whispers—standing in
The Chapel, lighted dim.

“Scape o?” repeats the Rector. “Why,
What kind of name is this?”

“A Bibul name, Marse Henry, dat ’s
Perzactly what it is,

“Kaze in de bressed Scriptur’ Book—
I heern ’em read it so—
Hit say, ‘When Moses clum de Mount
He view de lan’scape o’.’ ”

OLE 'LIJAH'S WEDDIN'
A PLANTATION EPISODE

The fickleness of woman and the inconstancy of man is not alone confined to the heroes and heroines of song.

Cupid, sly archer, plays his pranks everywhere—not only amongst the grandees of higher life, but as well amongst the lowly, 'way down South, where the banjos ring.

How one saucy maid served the gay Lothario of the plantation will be seen in the following.



“Lawd! marstah, I done change mah mind—I gwine tek fid-
dlin’ Jim”

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OLE 'LIJAH'S WEDDIN'

A PLANTATION EPISODE

"HELLO dar, Rasmus; come right heah, an' try yo'
pigeon-wing,
While Billy pat de juba, an' Torm chune up an' sing;
I 's tooken down de fiddle, an' resined up de bow—
Hit 'pears ter me, you lazy-bones is movin' moughty
slow.

"Don' you know dat Bruddah 'Lijah gwine 'o ma'y Sal
Jones ter-night?

(I neber b'liebed dat ole black dog could cotch a coon so
light.)

But he 'tarmined fur to git her, an' he got her—so he
say.

Yaas, I knowed his mine wah med up, from Aunt
Jinny's buryin'-day,

"Caze when dat po' ole wife o' his'n wah lyin' dar so sick,
'Lije boas' he gwine 'o ma'y ergin, an' he gwine do it
quick;

He 'lowed he 'd git de laklies' gal dis ole plantation got,
An' on Bro' Simon's Sally Ann I seed his eyes wuz sot.

"So co'se we 's boun' ter reel an' jig when he jine frisky
Sal,

Caze *he* feelin' moughty shaky 'bout gittin' ob dat gal;
Fur it wuz jes *yistiddy* he done 'fided unto me
He 'd no mo' *sho* o' gittin' her dan cotchin' ob a flea.

DE NAMIN' OB DE TWINS

"Dese 'hearsals ob de 'formance is de bery lates' t'ing—
Dough Ras, we knows, is mastah han' to cut de pigeon-
wing—

Caze when Marse Dan ma'y Miss Pauline on Chris'mus,
don' you know,

De 'formahs 'formed deir 'formances plum froo de day
befo'?

"So, Rasmus, try yo' pigeon-wing, an' Billy pat an' dance
(Dat warn't yo' best—now onct agin—I 'll gib you nud-
dah chance),

Fur Marse an' Miss 'll be down heah. You don' b'lieb
what I say?

Ob co'se ole Marstah 's comin' down to gib de bride
away."

* * * * *

'Tis evening—and the cabin glows with royal, blazing
fire,

Which dances on those dusky forms in gaudiest attire;
The flames roar loud and sing and leap far up the
chimney wide,

A-welcoming with glowing heart Ole 'Lijah and his
bride.

Here sits Aunt Vic—the parson's wife—her next Cas-
sandra, then

Is Cleopatra, whose weird charms had "cunju'd" all the
men;

For, queen amongst the dusky swains—like "sorc'ress
of the Nile"—

Mad "Antonys" *she*, too, had won with her alluring
smile.

OLE 'LIJAH'S WEDDIN'

Black Mammy leans in easy chair, supreme amongst the
rest,

Her dear old head bandana-crowned, and 'kerchief
'cross her breast,

A-chiding now those giggling girls—Rose, Snowflake,
Celestine,

Diana, Topsy, Anarchy, Rox Ann and Josephine.

Here stands the coachman—Daddy Dave—with Jerry,
Peter, Paul,

And blind old Simon, who declares he 's "come ter see
it all,"

While close in group Erasmus, who will cut the pigeon-
wing,

With the famous Tom, and Billy, to pat and dance and
sing.

And foremost in that smiling crowd the Master, tall
and gray,

Steps near the proud old parson's side, to give the bride
away;

Whilst, calm and fair, ole Missus stands among those
faces bright—

Like star amid the ebon clouds, aglow with softest light.

And here at last, through titt'ring crowd, they come—
the smiling pair—

* And stand before old Parson Bob, with white and bushy
hair,

Who starts, ere he commences, and gazed with puzzled
look

At first upon the dusky groom—then on his open book.

DE NAMIN' OB DE TWINS

"Hit 'pears ter me, mah bredren, dat dere 's hoodoo in
dis bann

Ob mat'imony—caze I 'low'd tie '*Lije* ter Sally Ann—
But, 'Great King in de mawnin'!' is mah eyes a-gittin'
dim?

Dis heah ain' Bruddah 'Lijah—dis sholy cyarn' be *him*.

"Fur Gawd's sek! now, ole Marstah, jes tell me what to
do!

Is ole Bob goin' crazy, an' gittin' blinded, too?
Dis heah ain' ole Elijah—onless he tuk a strain,
An' gone back on de road o' life an' got him young
again."

With smile suppressed, yet beetling brow, the Master
glanced aside

At the sporty, bandy-legged groom, who claimed the
saucy bride.

"Where is *Elijah*, girl?" he said. "What have you done
with *him*?"

"Lawd! Marstah, I done change mah mind—I gwine tek
'*Fiddlin' Jim*.'"

AUNT 'LIZA'S VISIT NORTH

Aunt Eliza was a real person and, just as she states it, made a real visit to New York.

But her experience, as related to the darkies on the plantation after returning home, should prove to the over-zealous philanthropist that the South knows her own children best.

AUNT 'LIZA'S VISIT NORTH

"My Gawd! I 's home agin. T'ank de Lawd! I 's back once mo' on de ole plantation.

"I jes got so sick up Norf dat I tells Miss Louisa (you know she 's de Gin'l's wife dat sont fer me ter come an' see 'em) dat I jes boun' 'o come home; so I sot out yis-tiddy, an' de Lawd knows dat steam hoss couldn' go fas' enough fer dis chile.

"I 'low'd de tears in dese ole eyes wuz all dried an' gone; but, chillun, when I seed de injine a-slowin' up ter stop, down dar by de pos' offus, I 'clars I fa'rly couldn' see an', Lawd! by dem mystifications, how near I come a-missin' ole 'Possum Pete.'

"He were jes a-shufflin' out de do', wid de mail-bag as I was a-gittin' offen dem steam cyars, an' I putty nigh bus' mah ole pipes a-hol'rin' to him.

"'Name o' Gawd!' says I, 'old Pete, don' you go a-scootin' back to de plantation 'outen me, fer I 's been a-prayin' to de Great King all de way to git me dar some how or nuddah dis bressed night; an', sho as de Marstah reign, ef here I don' see you an' de ole yaller mule jes at de 'p'inted time. De Lawd sut'ny do he'p de chosen.'

"But how is you, chillun? An' what you-all been a-doin' sence I lef' you? Is ole 'Lijah marr'd? Is Aunt Ca'line's rheumatiz done tuk her off yit? An' did Brud-dah Dan'l go 'way wid de army men?

"Well, all I can say is—dat any niggah's we'come ter

DE NAMIN' OB DE TWINS

go up Norf 'at wants to; but me, yaas, mah Lawd! dis chile done hed enough.

"Dey meks you feel so kinder out o' place dar. Wah, I fel' all de time lak a cabbage 'at some fool done plant in a flower-pot—he! he!—a-settin' me down in de parlor, a-waitin' on me, an' a-callin' me 'Miss Lewis.'

"I 's jes lonesome, I tells you, chillun, to heah somebody say 'Aunt 'Liza' once agin, an' I tell dat, too, to de Gin'l's fo'ks.

"You ax how come I go up dar, Sis Betty?

"Well—you see, durin' ob de war, de Yankee Gin'l who was a-campin' nigh our plantatiom he come heah an' say he wan' a cook.

"Well, o' co'se he gwine he'p hisse'f to de bes' ole Miss got, so he cont'aban' *me*, an' tek me to de camp, whar I show him—fer de fus' time in 'e life—what were fitten fer to eat; an' dat ar camp was de populouses place erlong de line, casin' fer ole 'Liza's beat biscuits.

"Dey neber furgot 'em nuddah, fer arter de Wah I gits a lettah (you 'membahs dat lettah you brung me, don' you, Pete?) wid a big postum stamp on it, an' hit bringin' me de money from de Gin'l to come up Norf an' mek a visit to 'e wife.

"He say he want me see de big New York, an' de fine people up dar dat set de niggahs free.

"So, as ole Miss done daid, an' de gre't house was a-settin' dar, lonesome lak, a-mournin' fer her, I got ole Parson Bob to write de wo'd dat I 'd be dar at de 'p'inted time.

"So I gits mah black satin dress fix up—what bin in mah chis' dis twenty yeah (you 'membahs, Sis Tabby,

AUNT 'LIZA'S VISIT NORTH

dat dress ole Miss' aunt gimme dat time she down heah to Marse Bob's weddin'? Well, dat de dress)—an' de gray imbr'ider'd shawl 'at Miss Matilda she done lef' me in de will, an' de pu'ple bonnet wid de green feddah 'at Marstah git me in Petersbu'g time o' de barbecue.

"Well, ole Pete an' de yaller mule dey tuk de lil' ha'r trunk down to de train (you knows de ha'r trunk Marse Charlie use ter hab?); an' de fus' t'ing I know'd I was jes a-ridin' lak de white fo'ks.

"Now you ain' goin' b'lieb what I gwine tell you, but de Gin'al *hisse'f* he meet me at de landin'-place (caze, you knows, I 's too good a cook ter git los'), an' he start to put me in de kyarr'ge what he brung fer me.

"De Lawd be praised, Gin'al! I sez, 'git in fus' yo'se'f.'

"Ah! no, Mrs. Lewis,' sez he, 'we don' do dat way up heah.' So in he han' me, jes lak I 's ole Miss—an' me a-feelin' lak a fool all de time.

"Now you sees de diff'ence, Miss Lewis,' sez he, 'tween de Norf an' de Souf. Yo' ole Marstah wouldn' do dis, would he?'

"Great King in de mawnin'! *no, sah*—he ain' do no sech a perceedin' as dis; no mo' *I* wouldn' 'a done it, nuther!

"What! *me* ride in a kyarrage wid ole Marstah? Lawd! no; *my* ole Marstah too good fer dat—he *qual'ty*, he is! Niggah ride afo' to drike 'im, an' ahind ter open de do' an' de gate, but nary one dare put a foot inside *dat* coach, I tells you. Ole Unc' Eli would 'a' skin him to def; 'sides, niggah 's got too much 'spec' fer *hisse'f* to do dat—he *wouldn' hab* a Marstah he could ride wid!

DE N.AMIN' OB DE TWINS

"He neber say no mo' to me, chillun, 'til he git to de house, an' den, I tells you, he han' me ouden dat kyarrage moughty quiet lak. Den he ring de bell, an' a sassy yaller, free-lookin' niggah open de do'. He look kind o' temptious lak at me, but I know'd he ain' neber bin use ter nuthin', so I kind o' 'scuse him, in mah mind. (Co'se he ain' neber hed no young Marstahs an' Missuses lak we 's had, ter show 'im mannahts, so I didn' pay no 'tention 't all ter him.)

"Well, chillun, dere ain' no use in my goin' no furdah, 'cep'in' ter say dat Miss Gin'al 's so glad ter see me dat she wen' an' done gimme *her* room (dey was all lil' bits o' cut-up places no biggah dan ole Missus' big closeks), caze she say 'I too stout'—dat what she call it—'ter sleep on de parlor couch,' an' she 'ould tek it herse'f.

"'Lawd! Miss Gin'al,' I sez, 'let dis ole fat niggah sleep *on de flo'*'; I 's done it many a time. Why, when ole Miss was sick, you couldn' drike me 'way f'om dat dar pallet what I med down by her baid—dat was my 'bidin' place.'

"'Oh! no, Miss Lewis,' she sez, 'you 'll find you 's wid a *diff'ent people* now.'

"'Yaas, name o' Gawd!' I sez, 'I finds I is.'

"'But afo' I goes to baid I mus' tell you-all one mo' t'ing—dey wan' me *eat at de table* wid em! But ole 'Liza draw de line dar, an' when Miss Gin'al say: 'I knows de white fo'ks at de plantatiom neber ax you eat wid dem, did dey?' I bu'sts out a-takin' up fer mah fam'ly. 'No, marm; o' co'se not! Why, mah ole Miss 's one o' dem Cy-artahs what come f'om Shirley on de

AUNT 'LIZA'S VISIT NORTH

Jeems! Dey hed niggahs by de hund'eds—de bes' qual'ty niggahs in ole Virginny! Dey eat wid niggahs? Lawd! Miss Gin'al, how you does 'sult me!

"Den one day dey tuk me down de bigges' street in de worl', she say, an' show'd me all de sto's—or shops she call 'em. Eb'rybody look at me an' her, an' I fel' lak sayin': 'Dis ain' my young Mistis, an' please 'scuse her. She mean all right, but she don' know no bettah dan to go 'long de street—lak a ekal—wid a ole niggah.' She don' know dat de white pigeon an' de crow an' diff'ent birds, an' ain' got no business a-keepin' comp'ny togedder.

"But I tells you, Sis Nancy, dey don' know nuthin' 't all up dar 'bout 'stocracy. Dey says eb'ry man 's alike, but dat 's a lie, fer I knows I neber look lak some o' de onsightly t'ings what I seen a-movin' 'roun'.

"But it sut'inly was true in one p'int, caze I seed de Marstahs a-settin' up in front, *a-dribin' de coachmans*—bof black an' white—while dey—now heah me, Lawd!—was a-settin' behin', jes as imperint, in reel sto' clo'es, wid dey han's fol', lak a image. Umph, umph! dat 's de time dey do looks erlike. Dis ole 'Liza Jane couldn' hardly tell 'em 'part.

"An' I neber seed nobody dar what could tech our Marse Rob, nor was white an' putty lak Miss Nancy. But I 'spec' de qual'ty was outen o' town, caze I didn' see none ob 'em.

"De womens look lak de pictur' ladies in de books; but dey was kinder rearin' up dey haid, lak ole Jane's Desdemony use ter do when she git on dem Sunday clo'es o' her'n. You 'membahs dat, Sis Dinah?

DE NAMIN' OB DE TWINS

"An', Great King! you oughter seed de niggahs a-struttin' 'roun' in *dey missus' new clo'es*. (I knows nobody ain' neber wore dem clo'es, caze dere warn't de tech o' Time on 'em.)

"But, I tells you, de kinks in my ha'r fa'rly stud out straight when dey was all a-axin' me 'bouten de ole plantation. De Gin'al come right out one time an' ax me did ole Marstah eber whup any ob his color'd fo'ks.

"'No, sah,' I sez, 'Marstah he hire de Norden ober-seer fer to do dat dutty wuk fer him; an' mighty lil' ob hit done on our plantation, I tells you. Dey warn't but one niggah been whup dar in sebenteen yeahs, an' dat was ole 'Lijah an' *he* were whupped fer beatin' his wife. No, sah! Marstah ain' gwine sile his han's. He 's de *reel quality*, born down Souf, right on de plantation. Why, he ain' neber eben bin up Norf! He 's reel 'stocracy, he is. His muddah was a Randolph, an' her muddah was a Lewis! Dis fam'ly o' our'n neber 'low'd no sech perceedin's. Dey was good to dey color'd fo'ks, from de leas' to de greates' an' f'om de fus' to de las'.'

"An' when I was a-leavin', de Gin'al's wife she say 'Good-bye, 'Liza'—you see, I teach'd her som'n'—'now ain' you hed a good time—ain' we treat you good?'

"'Lawd! yaas, 'm,' I sez, 'mighty good; but den I feels all 'e time lak you hed sot de fryin'-pan on to de sideboa'd—an' I ain' bin use ter no sich.'

"Well, den she call dat yaller boy, right quick, an' he come all rigg'd up in 'e bil'd shut, an' brass buttons lak de Gin'al, an' she tol' 'im see me to de train. He done it an', t'ank de Lawd! my visitatiom war ober; caze I

AUNT 'LIZA'S VISIT NORTH

done hed 'nuf o' dem furriners up Norf an' de free issue.

"Afo' I lef', Miss Gin'al try to 'suade me ter stay an' cook fer her (den I see froo all dat perliteness I bin a-gittin'), but I tell her: 'No, I warn't a-lookin' fer no place ter cook, dese days.'

"An' den de Gin'al ax me ef he warn't good ter me in de camp. 'Yaas, sah,' I sez, 'but dat ain' lak cookin' in de kitchen. I wouldn' enj'y mah cookin' dese days; it 's too diff'ent f'om de ole times.'

"He ax me how dat was, an' I tells him 'at down home, whar I was de fus' cook, when Miss hed comp'ny all she hed to do was to say: 'Liza, I wants dinner tomorrow fer thirteen, instid o' five' (dar warn't neber no onlucky numbahs down dar), an' I 'd say: 'Yaas, Missus, all you 's got ter do is jes ter leab out de ingregiums.' An', my Lawd! what a dinnah ole 'Liza 'd git! My table look lak it 'd fa'rly cry out wid whaten was on it: turkey, ham, croquettes, cel'ry, sour pickles, an' dem sweet pickles what come f'om Brandon, ok'a, aig-plant, salsify, commartoses, sweet 'taters, an' de Lawd knows what!

"An' arter Pomp an' Cæсах an' Jonas tek in de dishes I use ter run in f'om de kitchen an' tek a peep at dat table afo' de white fo'ks git dar. An', I tells you, I was de proudest niggah in ole Virginny when I heahs de silvah a-rattlin', an' de dishes a-clashin', an' de glasses a-techin', an' de ladies an' de beaux a-laughin', an' ter know dat it was *ole 'Liza's wuk* what set de whole t'ing off, an' kep' it a-goin'. 'No, sah, Marse Gin'al,' I sez, 'I 'clars I couldn' cook up Norf dese days, fer de way dey

DE NAMIN' OB DE TWINS

runs t'ings now jes natchelly hu'ts mah feelin's. Caze, accordin' to de raisin' what ole Miss ginme, I considahs dat dere 's ontirely too—much—shufflin'—ob—de—dishes—fer—de—littleness—ob—de—vittles.' ”

DE "YANKEE" BUCKEYE

“Bruddah Dan’l, is dey anywhar in de Scriptuhs dat dey ’s mentiom med ob de color’d pusson?”

“Why, ob co’s’e, Bruddah Johnsing—*co’s’e dey is*. Ain’ you ’membah whar hit say Nigger Demus come to de Lawd by night? *Dar* is special mentiom med ob his ’plexiom.”

DE "YANKEE" BUCKEYE

"GOOD-MORNIN', Bruddah Anderson, I 's glad ter see you,
sho;

Jes tek de rockin'-cheer, an' set right dar aside de do'.
I 's awful bad wid pains ter-day—I tells you what it is—
Dese *Yankee* buckeyes ain' no good ter cuah de rheu-
matiz.

"Down home, when tech o' mis'ry come—I 'membahs
moughty well—

A buckeye f'om de pastur'-lot wuk lak er cunjer spell;
But yarbs up Norf 's plum diff'ent kind—leas'wise so
Selim say—

'Pears lak dey ain' know how ter tek de mis'ry erway.

"Mah ole man, he done jes step out ter git a leetle tea,
An' we 'll be proud ter have you tek a cup wid him an'
me;

(*Azcuse* dis smokin' chimbly-flue. I 's done mah lebel
bes',

But de Debil sho gits in 'im when de wind is f'om de
wes')."

"I 's called in, Sistah Caryline, ter 'spoun' wid you ter-
day,

Kaze I fear you is backslidin' f'om de straight an' narrer
way;

DE NAMIN' OB DE TWINS

Ole Bruddah Hambone 's *eb'ry* night a-'zortin' us ter
grace,
An' you *ain' holdin' up his han's* by showin' ob yo'
face.

"'Pears lak you 'lows to tu'n yo' back on him de Lawd
did call—
Dat 'lected man, choose jes de same ez 'Phesiums, Job
an' Paul.
So at de meetin' dar las' night, ob moanin', pray'r an
praise,
Dey 'low'd dey 'd drap *all* f'om de book dat don' men'
up deir ways.

"Dey 's down on Sis Tabithy Jones fer dancin' wid de
men
An' a-gibin' ob a shindig to de Zion's 'uppah ten';
Dey 'lows to rein up Deacom Brown fer goin' to dat
show,
An' f'om de roll dey gwine 'o drap Sis Lily White once
mo'.

"Dey 'clars *she* is er *infidul*, kaze dey done heah her say
She don' believ de whale he swallah Jonah, anyway;
An' so dey 's gwine 'o clean 'em out—de sinnahs got ter
go—
Bekaze our chu'ch's 'membah book mus' be ez 'white ez
snow.'

"An' so dis mawnin' heah I is, ter 'zort wid you an' pray,
An' wrastle wid de Lawd, dat you 'll limp back to Zion's
way,

DE "YANKEE" BUCKEYE

An' 'seech Him gib you grace to shed de debilmint ob sin,

Dat, lak ole Nicodemus, chile, you mought be 'born agin.' "

Old Caroline a-kimbo set her arms with easy grace,
And fixed a pair of flashing eyes upon the parson's face.
(That Yankee buckeye 'd done its work as well—'twas plain to see—

As though it came from "pastur'-lot," 'way down in Tennessee);

For up she sprang. "I ain' gwine do no bettah dan I is,
Caze jes to *tie me down*, de Lawd *He* sont dis rheumatiz;

So heah I sets obejient—but kind o' rastless, too—
A-mindin' mah own business—lak some uddahs bettah do.

"Fer dat brack man I got no use, a-comin' in de night
Jes lak he 'shamed ter ax de Lawd dat question in de light.

Ole Missus tol' me many time de Debil is ter pay
When fo'kses goes an' does by night what dey dar n't do by day.

"When Nigger Demus heerd dem wo'ds: 'Ye mus' be born ergin,'

Dat man ain' tekin' in his mind hit meanin' born f'om sin.

He 's countin' on *de color*, an' he bustin' wid derlight,
Caze he 'low, ef he git borned *ergin*, he mought git borned—*white*."

DE FAMBLY TREE

The habit of boasting was a great failing amongst the negroes of the old South.

Plantations vied with each other in wonderful tales concerning their respective owners and families; which tales, through ignorance, were unconsciously so magnified that, to a person of reasonable intelligence, they were most absurd.

"Uncle Jeff," having been a house-servant in palmy days, when the establishment was maintained in lordly style, had heard so much of the "fus' famblies" that his old woolly pate was permeated with the idea that good blood—like cleanliness—was next to godliness.

With such belief he fully justifies himself in earnestly chiding "Marse Rob" for what he terms "deesrespec' todes de Fambly Tree."

DE FAMBLY TREE

"I TELLS you what it is, Marse Rob, you is a plum *deesgrace* to de 'fambly tree!'—an' *dat 's what you is*.

"You ain' keer nuthin' 't all 'bouten dat tree?

"Well now, chile, I tells you it 's high time you *was* a-keerin', kaze *dat tree* is de mos' 'portantes' t'ing in we 's fambly dis day. Ole Mastah set a lot o' sto' by hit, kaze dey is fo'ks on dar who sarbed de King, time Marse Cromwell hed his haid cutten off. Yaas, I 's offen hearn tell o' dat.

"Why, Marse Rob, mah dad say dat ole Marse's gran'-pa—Marse Alec—*he* was—right—dar—on—de—spot—hisse'f—a-seein'—it. An' *he* tol' de house niggahs on de plantatiom all 'bouten it, an' dey 's brought down de story, kaze dey 'low we chillun oughter be grafted wid de p'inted facts.

"An' heah you say—yo' pa's own chile—dat you don' keer—nuthin'—'t all—'bouten—dis—tree. I 's 'shamed o' you—I sholy is.

"Now what is you a-laughin' at, Marse Rob? You sutt'inly is lef' yo' mannaahs ahind you, up dar to dat 'Varsity school whar you done been, kaze you neber use ter laugh lak dat at ole Jeff afo' you mix yo'se'f up wid dem furrinaahs when de po' ole niggah was 'temptin' to 'suade you to trod in de footprints ob yo' pa.

"You say Cromwell warn't de man what had his haid cutten off?

DE NAMIN' OB DE TWINS

"Now look heah, Marse Rob, you is jes '*vadin' de p'int*; fer, wheddah it wuz Marse Cromwell, or de King afo' or ahind 'im *mek no diff'ence 't all* to dis story, kaze ob co'se de tale may hab got *some leetle twisted* a-comin' down de line. An', I tells you, de gre't fo'ks on dat squar' o' paper dar, dey is '*shamed o' you, too*, an' dey 'd be a-gittin' down offen dat tree in a hurry—ef dey could—you 'haves so ongodly an' onrighteous lak, a-goin' dat erway agin' yo' fambly.

"Don' cher know dey-all, a-roos'in' dar in dem branches, wuz de high-mos' qual'ty? An' dat when dey come ober heah to ole Virginny dey jes hed deir ships a-loaded down wid deir silvah, an' deir gol', an' deir fine furmicher? An', honey, dem fo'ks done set de Gov'*mint up on hit's laigs* when it wuz a lettle teensy-weensy t'ing, too weak fer to stan' aloney; an', afo' de King, Marse Rob, dey 'ouldn' a-been *no Niter Stets*, ef hit had'n a-been fer *dis fambly*. (Dat what ole Marse tol' me one day—or som'n' lak dat—when we wuz a-ridin' inter town, me on ole Bess, an' him on de gray mar'.)

"'Why,' he sez, 'ole Virginny she jes been a-gibbin' de country *presidints*, an' jedges, an' speakahs'—yaas, honey, she gib 'em jes ez easy ez de oak-tree drap de acorns. An' moughty nigh *all* dem 's on dis heah tree what we 's 'sputin' 'bout.

"An' den, you see, chile, ez we 's fambly been 'bleeged to tek a humblin' seat sence de wah, it am heap mo' 'portanter dat we all sticks by hit now, an' don' cas' no 'spicions on hit; kaze, de Lawd knows! we is hed trouble enuf.

"You says dem ole daid-an'-gone codgers didn' know

DE FAMBLY TREE

eb'ryt'ing? Dat dey brung de trouble on deyselves, an' dat de Yankees was all right?

"Lawd! Marse Rob, what 's a-gittin' you? You sholy is l'arn'd a lot o' 'strep'rous idees up dar to dat 'Varsity college whar you been. Is dey teach you sech, chile? Well, honey, dem gemmens I 'spec' kin l'arn you eddication an' sech lak, but dey don' know nuthin' 't all 'bouten us—ob co'se dey don'—kaze dey hain' neber libed down heah—an' quinqsecontly dey don' perzactly onderstan' de way we 's been a-mixin' de colors.

"An' it sutt'inly do hu't my heart to heah you a-goin' on so deesrespectum 'bouten de 'fambly tree.'

"'Scuse me, honey; 'scuse me, Marse Rob—ole Jeff don' lak to say hit—but you sholy cyarn' be yo'se'f dis ebenin', is you? Caze I 'low'd you look moughty on-stiddy when I seed you a-ridin' up de lawn jes afo' sun-down f'om Fairfax Hall. Lawd, Lawd! he'p—my—soul! de debil sutt'inly—*am—in—dat—mint—patch!*

"Dis heah tree what we 's got undah 'scussion is been a-bearin' de fines' fruit in ole Albemarle fer hund'eds o' yeahs, an' you ain' gwine 'o be de fus' rotten apple dar, is you, Marse Rob?

"You see, honey, when ole Marstah die, he leab de raisin' ob you to ole Miss—so she feel moughty 'sponsibul lak. An' las' Sunday, when de light all went outen de sky, at de same time de life was a-goin' outen yo' Ma, she call me to de baid-side—tuk me by de han', an' say: 'Jeff, when I 's gone, an' my boy comes home, look arter him—look arter yo' Marse Rob, an' beg him to leab de drink alone.' Dem was her las' wo'ds, chile—sho as de

DE NAMIN' OB DE TWINS

King reigns—an' I knows dey 's as good to you as jinin' de plaige.

"An' now, Marse Rob, one uddah reason why I don' wan' you deesgrace dat tree is kaze I was *a-consid'rin' de 'spectability ob bein' on hit mahse'f*; so I was gwine ax you tek de pen an' wrote down dar—jes by de roots—de name o' ole black Jeff. You 'd bettah wrote it in partic'lar, Marse Rob: 'Jefferson Madison Jones, de faif-ful sarvant ob ole Marse.' I wants you do hit now, afo' I passes, lak ole Miss, froo de valley ob de shadder—kaze I 's a-gittin' erlong in dis vale ob yeahs. I is sarbed yo' pa an' ma mo' 'an seb'nty yeah, an' I wants hab mah name on dat papah, 'longside o' deir'n. An' you need'n be afear'd, Marse Rob, to write mah name down dar, kaze, dough I ain' nuffin' but a 'umblin' sarvant, ole Jeff hain' *neber*—*yit*—brung—no—deesgrace—on—de—fambly.

"What you lookin' at me so cur'ous lak dat fer, Marse Rob? You ax me how 't is 'bouten mahse'f not a-bringin' 'no deesgrace on de fambly'? An' huccome I not be a-libin' now wid Roxann, nor Susannah, nor Penelope, nor Sal, nor none o' dem 'spousals what I done made?

"Well now, in co'se, Marse Rob, you is techin' on a ser'ous p'int, an' one which ain' got nuffin' 't all to do wid dese 'greemints. Howsomever, I 'lows I *is* been a-swingin' mahse'f ruddah free an' easy down de line o' mattermony; but den you knows dat dey allus wuz a *considerbul* 'safety in numbahs,' so—he! he!—dat 's de way I kind o' tuk fer to *protec'* mahse'f. An' asides, de Angel o' Glory couldn' hab lib wid none o' dem dar niggah 'omen what done pester me wid dey 'tentioms;

DE FAMBLY TREE

no mo' could ole Jeff, who don' sot hisse'f up fer *no sanctified membah*. An', Lawd! Marse Rob, you 's got eddication enough to 'vince yo'se'f dat in some ve'y inconsiderate pertic'lars niggahs don' kyount. Dis heah 'ma'yin' an' gibbin' in ma'iage' 'peared to me lak hit was one o' dem pertic'lars, but de *las'* one—dat sassy jade, Miss Adeline Tuckah—didn' you heah 'bout her, Marse Rob? *She* 'low dat *she* gwine do de white fo'ks' ac', an' she gwine hab a preachah, an' er book, to tie de knot. (I 'spec' she think ole Jeff slip out too easy.) Well now, I sho is afeared you 'll argify dat I *is* fell f'om grace when I 'splains you de outcome o' dat ma'iage; but she sont Unc' Eli's Ned fer de ole blin' parson, down dar at Ribber J'int, to come an' do de business right.

"I was kinder skeered when de preachah he come, an' dat gal, all fussed up in her bes' clo'es, 'gin a-sidlin' up ter me, wid a lot o' niggahs dar ter witness de perceed-in's, she say. (Umph, umph! Glory be to Moses! ole Jeff feel he *sho* is gone dat time.) Well, de parson was a-perceedin', an' I felt mah knee-j'int's a-gibbin' way, an' mahse'f a-gittin' whitah an' whitah wid eb'ry bref I draws, an' a-wishin' to de Lawd I was outen dat box—when ef dat blame ole niggah ain' ax me ef I tek her fer 'bettah or fer wuss'?"

"*'No, sah,'* I sez, 'parson, not yit, caze I 's done hed ontirely *too much 'speunce* in dis line to be ketched in *dat trap*; so jes lemme tek her *fus'*, an' gib 'er a trial, an' den I kin let you know mo' sartain 'bouten dat "bettah an' wuss" business; kaze, afo' Gawd! ole Jeff ain' a-gwine run — nary — nuddah — resk—by—*mekin—a—blin'—trade*—wid *no niggah 'oman.'*"

DE LAS' "WILL" AN' TESTIMINT"

For the benefit of those who are unacquainted with the characteristics of the old-time Southern negro I prefix these verses with a word of explanation.

They were a most unaccountable people, for their own children seeming to possess little or no affection, while they expended a wealth of love and tenderness upon the children of their masters.

In the matter of dying, some of them seemed to enjoy as many lives as a cat—one old woman being known to have sent for her mistress nine times in as many years to say the last good-bye.

The incident of the bosom-pin is a true one, also the willing of the cabin to Marse John.



“Dis miz’ry—in—de—back ’s nigh gone, so put dat pen away,
An’ we ’ll mek out dis testimint agin some uddah day” *Page 131*

DE LAS' "WILL AN' TESTIMINT"

"COME in, Marse John, an' please, sah, set right heah
aside de baid—

Down dar whar I kin see you, 'out de raisin' ob mah
haid—

Caze I wants you write de *testimint* I 's gwine 'o gib
you now,

Afo' I feels de dew o' Def a-sottlin' on mah brow.

"You fotch de pen, did you, Marse John, de papah an'
de ink?

Well, Heb'nly Marstah! gib me grace to cl'ar mah haid
an' t'ink;

Caze afo' I goes I wants you bof—you an' Miss Nancy,
too—

To heah dese partin', dyin' wo'ds I 's boun' to tol' to
you.

"Yaas, praise de Lawd! I 'll mek *mah* will while I is
got de bref,

Fur I ain' lak de Squire who 'clar'd a will wuz courtin'
Def—

An' so he feer'd to drap de line, to leab his leabin's
right,

An' when de Debil tote 'im off dere wuz dat scan'lous
fight.

DE NAMIN' OB DE TWINS

"Dis un want *dis*, dat un want *dat*, ob what de po' man
lef' ;

'Pears lak dey all wuz stan'in' 'roun' afo' he done los'
his bref.

An' what de eenin' ob dat fuss?—when he guv up de
ghos'—

De bery *wuss one in de lot*, Marse John, he got de
mos'.

"I 's offen writ mah will afo', when Def he 'pear to me,
But dis 's mah las'es' *testimint* de worl' will *ever* see ;
Caze dis time I is *sholy gone*. I seed it in de night,
When a visium come an' tech me in a shinin' robe o'
white.

"I ain' got much to leab behin', de Lawd in Heben knows.
Mah specs, dese yaller beads I w'ars, mah chist, mah
Sunday clo'es,

Mah blue kid glubs, de Injy shawl Miss Nancy done
gib me,

An' dis littl' pictur', by de baid, ob Marstah Gin'al Lee.

"Dis is de one, you know, Marse Phil he gib to me dat
day

Afo' he tuk 'is gran'pa's s'ord an' rode so fas' away ;

Lawd! I kin see mah chile right now, an' heah him say
good-bye,

An' on mah cheek kin feel de teah a-drappin' f'om his
eye.

"De w'arin' t'ings, you kin write down, I 'll leab to ole
Torm's Bess,

Caze she is allus treated me heap bettah dan de res' ;

DE LAS' "WILL AN' TESTIMINT"

She 's tended to de gyardin-patch, an' med mah mullin
tea,

When nary nuddah ob dem gals 'ould do a t'ing fur me.

"Mah pictur' heah ob Gin'al Lee I ain' gwine gib away,
Caze I wants hit risin' wid me on de Rassurrakshum
Day;

So, arter I is laid out in mah ole black satin dress,
Jes put hit lak a bosom-pin, right heah upon mah breas'.

"An' now, Marse John, I 's comin' to de p'int I wants to
mek—

An' dat is 'at mah cabin you won' let no niggah tek;
I gibs it back to you, Marse John, lak you gib it to me
Dat Chris'mus Day you tol' us dat me an' Dan wuz
free.

"I couldn' res' good in mah grabe—I 'clar's afo' de
Lawd!—

Ef I know'd dat big-mouf Venus, or dat Angelina
Maud,

Wuz gwine 'o lib whar *I* is libed, or sot whar *I* is sot,
An' use fur dey own glorymint de t'ings what *I* is got.

"You say dey is *mah chillun*, an' dey 's got de lawful
right?

Look heah, Marse John! I b'liebs *I* is some bettah now
to-night.

Dis miz'ry—in—de—back 's nigh gone—*so put dat pen
away,*

An' we' ll mek out dis *testimint* agin some uddah day."

MAMMY SUKEY'S BURYIN'

Almost every Southerner can recall a "Mammy Sukey," some faithful old negro whose affection for her master's family was only offset by their love and devotion to her.

The old mammy of whom these verses tell was a real character, and her "buryin'" a true incident.

She came from Virginia to Missouri in 1818 with a grandson of Governor Page and lived an honored member of his family for more than sixty years.

Over the household she exercised a gentle authority, and her cabin was the "city of refuge" for "de chillun" when threatened with punishment for repeated offence; yet, woe betide the little woolly head who fell beneath the ban of her displeasure.

She passed away in 1880—and was laid to rest in the cemetery at Lexington, "jus' at Marse Robert's feet."

MAMMY SUKEY'S BURYIN'

I STAND beside a time-worn grave, with headstone old and
brown,
O'er which the clinging ivy-leaves most tenderly have
grown.
I part them with a careless hand, to see the name more
clear,
And "Sukey, faithful nurse and friend," I read deci-
phered here.

The grave is in the Master's plot, just at the Master's
feet,
And villagers oft love to tell, in accents touching sweet,
Her last request: "Lawd! chillun, ole Mammy could die
glad,
Ef she know'd she 'd hev a 'buryin'' jes lak ole Mastah
had.

"I want you tuck me in de groun', jes at Marse Robert's
feet,
Dat when de King o' Glory come, His bressed Sain's ter
greet,
Me an' ole Marse, a-lyin dar, togedder we shall rise,
An' flop our wings—white wings, my Lawd!—to'ds man-
sions in de skies."

DE NAMIN' OB DE TWINS

And then, with sigh, toward the light she 'd turned her
 wrinkled face,
Whilst mellow beams from evening sun lit up the hal-
 lowed place;
For Christian soul, its warfare o'er, had entered into
 rest—
And Mammy's hands they folded then upon her quiet
 breast.

And so, when from that cabin home the spark of life had
 fled,
The "chillun" decked, with garden flowers, her narrow
 casket bed;
And then the Master's stalwart sons, down through the
 wood and grove,
Bore the black Mammy who had shared their childish
 joy and love.

And here the same old village priest, in spotless robe, had
 read,
With solemn tone and moistened eye, the "Burial of the
 Dead."
While to the darkies' plaintive dirge, with wailings wild
 and long,
The whip-poor-will and mocking-bird had lent their
 mournful song.

And so they laid her tenderly where she had wished to
 be—
At foot of "ole Marse Robert's" grave, beneath the wil-
 low tree.

MAMMY SUKEY'S BURYIN'

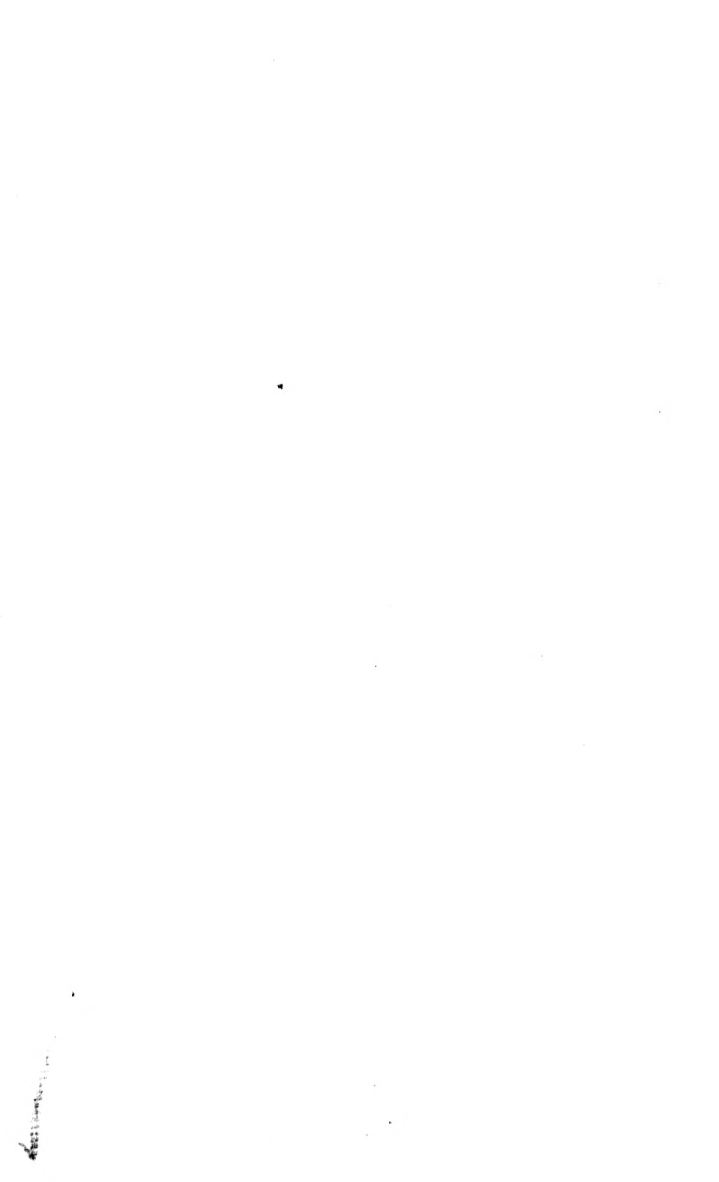
And then this modest stone was raised—just like the
Master's, too—
To mark another noble life to God and man most true.

And now the golden sun at morn, with warm rejoicing
light,
And soft, pale moon, with milder beams, throughout the
silent night,
Enfold the little quiet mound where "Mammy" lies
asleep,
While tender flowers and ivy-leaves their loving vigil
keep.

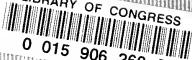
Oh, woman! Shafts around thee mark the resting-place
of men
Who may have won that bauble "Fame" by sword, or
voice, or pen;
But never o'er their costly biers flowed children's tears
more sad
Than those shed at that "buryin' jes lak ole Mastah had."

THE END

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